



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Statement on David Nicholas**

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
March 17, 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

This morning on my way to the Permanent Council, I passed David Nicholas' former office. It reminded me that he will always be in our hearts. When someone who has been important in our lives leaves us, their memory remains because they have become a part of us. David was such a person.

David's life reminded me of some valuable advice I heard some years ago. It was that life should be lived from the perspective of what we would like to have said about ourselves at our funeral. In my eyes, David did just that.

David was a man of boundless energy and infectious enthusiasm. I don't think he was ever without a smile, or ready to break into one, at the first encounter. The smile said, "let's work together, let's serve together and let's have some fun in the process."

I remember when we worked with the Ukrainian government to have David be the head of the OSCE Project Office in Kiev. One of my best arguments was that he would bring extraordinary enthusiasm, commitment, and new ideas to the position. His performance these past two years in that position bore that out in full measure and his contribution to making Ukraine a better place for its people will forever be remembered.

When we try to sum up someone's accomplishments, we usually refer to their family - in David's case, his lovely wife Karen, his daughter Kristen, and son Alex - the positions he has held, the people that have been important in his life, and in some cases, the fortune they acquired. In David's case, that fortune was large indeed. It was a legacy of an enthusiasm for helping others. He had a zeal for finding ways of giving and he did it matter-of-factly, without fanfare. He observed, he listened, he decided, he acted. It was as simple as that.

With that approach, which reflected depth and insight, he accomplished many things in his all-too-brief life, any one of which would have satisfied most of us. He was a state senator in his native state of Wyoming. He was a justice of the peace. He was a city attorney. He was a private practitioner. He worked for our Defense Department. He worked for NATO, and then we were privileged to have him here at our Mission to the OSCE, which he left after a couple of years to become an OSCE Ambassador as Head of the OSCE Project Office in Kiev. I was very reluctant to see him go, but I knew I needed to because there was such an important job to be done in Kiev - and little did we know then how important that job really would prove to be, as the Ukrainian people changed the relationship between those who governed and those who were governed.

So David, we say goodbye to you. You continue though to live in our hearts.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to say these few words about a great, dear, and always smiling, always helpful, colleague – Ambassador David Nicholas.